

Charles H. Baldwin House
Bellevue Avenue opposite Perry Street
Newport
Newport County
Rhode Island

HABS No. RI-334

HABS
RI,
3-NEWP,
42-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

CHARLES H. BALDWIN HOUSE

HABS
RI,
3-NEWP,
42-

Location: Gamir Doon, Bellevue Avenue.

Present Owner: Estate of Arakel Bozyan, c/o Miss Edith Bozyan.

Present Occupants: House is now divided into three apartments.

Present Use: Residential, multiple.

Statement of Significance: The work of Potter and Robertson of New York, this is an interesting example of the Shingle Style or American version of the Queen Anne Revival. It is characterized by richly textured, decorative surfaces, revival detail, and open planning.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners:

The building is located in Plat 33, Lot 35. The following is an incomplete chain of title from Newport City Clerk's Records for the city of Newport. Reference is to number and volume of the Land Evidence Books, (LEB.--, p.--).

1877 Deed of October 19, 1877, recorded in LEB. 48, p. 301.

From: Henry C. DeRahm (devisees of)
To: Charles H. Baldwin
For: \$15,800

"... a tract of land... bounded Northerly six hundred and three 75/100 feet, partly on land of the devisees of Edward King, deceased, partly on land of Francis Smith and partly on land of L. H. Whitwell, Easterly one hundred and three 4/10 feet, partly on the land of the devisees of said Edward King, and partly on the land of the devisees of Daniel J. Swinburne, deceased, Southerly five hundred and eighty-nine 52/100 feet, partly on land of G.B. Hazard and partly on land of these grantors, and Westerly on Bellevue Avenue, two hundred and eleven 6/10 feet, reference being hereby had to a plat of said parcel of land hereto annexed which is hereby made a part hereof. Being part of the same premises conveyed

to said Henry DeRahm by Charles E. Hammett by deed,
dated October 7, 1844, and recorded with Land Evidence
Deeds of said Newport in Liber 25 al page 98,..."

1886 Deed of November 9, 1886, recorded in LEB. 56, p. 217.

From: Charles H. Baldwin
To: Francis D. Carley
For: \$80,000

"... Lot with house and furnishings..."

1891 Deed of February 10, 1891, recorded in LEB. 63, p. 151.

From: Francis D. Carley
To: Charles B. Barnes
For: \$86,000

"... two lots with house..."

1891 Deed of February 10, 1891, recorded in LEB. 63, pp. 154-56.

From: Charles B. Barnes
To: Grace C. Carley
For: \$86,000

"... House and furniture and mortgage..."

1892 Deed of April 20, 1892, recorded in LEB. 64, pp. 133-34.

From: Grace C. Carley and Francis D.
To: Abjah Weston
For: \$30,000

"... House plus furnishings... mortgage of \$50,000
listed..."

1893 Deed of July 29, 1893, recorded in LEB. 65, p. 207.

From: Abjah Weston
To: Prescott Lawrence (Groton, Mass.)
For: \$62,500

Property plus furniture except certain listed items;
mentions \$50,000 mortgage from C.H. Baldwin to Francis
D. Carley now owned by Mary M. Baldwin; estate called
"Snug Harbor".

From: Prescott Lawrence
To: His wife, Katherine Lawrence, by will

From: Katherine Lawrence
To: Edward H. Bulkeley, Reginald B. Rives, Helen M. Rives,
and LeRoy King, by last will and testament

1948 Deed of August 12, 1948, recorded in LEB. 168, p.241-44.

From: Edward H. Bulkeley, Reginald B. Rives, Helen M.
Rives, and LeRoy King
To: Arakel H. Bozyan

two parcels, lot 34 and 35 of plat 33

1967 Deed of July 28, 1967, recorded in LEB. 221, p.521.

From: Margaret B. Bozyan
To: Theodore B. Bozyan, Edith H. Bozyan, Victoria B.
Gordon and Gladys B. MacLeod

1967 Deed of August 18, 1967, recorded in LEB. 221, p.528.

From: Gladys B. and F. Arakel Bozyan
To: Theodore B. Bozyan, Edith H. Bozyan, Victoria B.
Gordon and Gladys B. MacLeod

1967 Deed of August 11, 1967, recorded in LEB. 221, p.532.

From: Elinor B. Warburg
To: Theodore B. Bozyan, Edith H. Bozyan, Victoria B.
Gordon, and Gladys B. MacLeod

1967 Deed of November 9, 1967, recorded in LEB. 221, p. 524.

From: Margaret B. Jeffreys
To: Theodore B. Bozyan, Edith H. Bozyan, Victoria B.
Gordon, and Gladys B. MacLeod

2. Date of erection: 1877-1878
3. Architect: Potter and Robertson, (New York/New Jersey)
4. Builder, contractor, or supplier: P.E.Read of Hartford,
Connecticut, (Newport Journal, December, 1877)
5. Original plans: None known
6. Alterations and additions: See description
7. Important old views and descriptions:
 - a. Old views: There are two views, one of the east facade

of the building, another of the stables and the gardener's cottage. Photocopies are being made from these photographs in the Walter Shea Collection, Newport.

- b. Description: The following description is from a newspaper clipping in the Charles Handy Russell Scrapbook, 1796-1884, Volume III, p. 139. "Newport-Extensive Improvements Going on in the fashionable Seaside Resort", March 26, 1878.

"A very tasty appearing villa, after plans by Messrs. Potter and Robertson, of New York, will be completed early in June for Commodore C.H. Baldwin, United States Navy, of New York. It is located on Bellevue Avenue, a little south of the Ocean House, and adjoins the summer residence of the late Henry DeRahm, of New York. The site was purchased last summer from the heirs of Mr. DeRahm. The house is built of brick and wood. It is 95 feet long by 56 feet wide, but owing to its being cut up it does not look as large. All the ridges in the roofs are surmounted by a combing of an antique pattern, with turned finials of wood, surmounted with iron vanes of a very neat design. The outside of the house is part shingled, clapboarded, sheathed and carved, not two of its moulding being alike, and when it is taken into consideration that there are 150 patterns, an idea can be had of the work necessary to carry out the plans. [Facade in front is also covered pressed brick.] Above the large window are smaller ones in diamond pattern, thus showing the ancient as well as modern style. A porte-cochere extends over the front entrance some thirty feet, and it is of a very ancient style. The piazza piers are built of brick, two feet over the floors, and upon which rest a group of four columns, which support its roof. The estate, when completed, will be enclosed with a brick wall, which will be laid on a stone foundation six feet in depth and three feet in width. The main entrance is on the west side, facing Bellevue Avenue, and the main hall is reached through a vestibule 10 by 12 feet, which has a tile floor. An archway leads into the main hall, the steps being of marble. [The steps are of wood with decorative tile risers.] Turning to the left is the staircase hall, where you see a window which occupies the whole and which is 16 feet long/high/by 9 1/2 feet in width, with a row of colored lights at the top. [The colored lights, if ever extant, no longer exist. It is doubtful that they were ever positioned considering the diamond pattern of the lead mullions and the age of the windows in place presently.] The

staircase is made of oak and black walnut, with a heavy rail of the same material. Ascending the stairs and looking to the right a row of black walnut turned columns can be seen with a fancy balustrade running around all four sides, and from here an excellent view can be had of the hall. Nothing obstructs the view from the hall floor to the apex of the roof, 49 feet, 24 feet higher than the one at Mr. Lorrillard's house. All the gable windows on the east side which can be seen from the hall are filled with colored glass. [This detail does not exist.] Around the stairway on the second floor is a balustrade of ash and black walnut, with large turned posts in the corners. The ceiling of the hall, which is really the roof, is neatly finished in panels of black walnut and butternut. [These woods were not used in this manner. The woodwork throughout the house was all of one variety. However, the floors on the first floor are done in an elaborate parquet. The woodwork throughout the house is a light colored hard wood.] Leading from the hall to the right is the reception room which is 10 feet by 11 feet, finished in black walnut, fancy hard wood floor and mantel, and it is lighted by two large windows. [This room still has some of the original painted plaster decor.] To the left is the parlor. This room is 18 by 26 feet, finished in black walnut, inlaid floor of the same kind of wood, and is neatly wainscoted. It will have a marble mantel and hearth, and it is lighted with four large windows filled with French plate glass, the same kind of glass being used in all of the principal windows. [The mantel is of wood with plaster Adamesque details.] Further along to the right is the billiard room, 23 by 30 feet. In the south end of this room is a row of arches resting on heavy black columns. [This detail does not exist.] Over the costly marble mantel and chimney breast wall will be finished with fancy tile and terra cotta work. [This detail does not exist. A detailed photograph shows the wood mantel with revival of late 18th century decorative forms.] The ceilings are of black walnut, the panels being 18 inches square. Between these panels are heavy walnut beams, running crosswise and lengthwise. Over the east window is an arch of heavy stucco work. [This detail does not exist.] This window is 11 1/2 feet long by 6 1/2 feet wide, and the floors are of ash and walnut laid in fancy design. On the west side of the room there are three windows, two of which lead out upon the piazza. The windows on the east side lead on to a piazza, over which is a balcony which is reached from a chamber on the floor above. In front of the main hall is the dining room, which is

reached through an opening 8 feet wide, no doors being used. The dimensions of this room are 22 by 34 feet, and it has a fancy hard wood floor and ceiling, elegantly carved mantel and chimney breast of tile terra cotta work. [The woodwork of the mantel has built-up sections with no carving present.] It is lighted by three large windows and there is a row of arches resting on turned columns of black walnut running the entire length of the room. [This detail does not exist.] Leading from the dining room is the butler's pantry, which is 10 feet by 12 feet. From the butler's pantry, the kitchen, 16 by 24 feet, can be reached, and leading off the latter is another pantry, 8 by 18 feet. Underneath is the laundry, drying room, wine cellar, etc. On the third floor is a corridor running around two sides, with a railing in front, supported by a colonnade of columns. A mammoth chandelier will be suspended from the ceiling to within fifteen feet of the main floor. [The chandelier was never added.] At the head of the main staircase is another corridor, running around the entire opening of the hall, with a neat balustrade in front. On the second floor there are seven guest chambers averaging 18 by 20 feet square, and on the third floor are five more, averaging 12 by 16 feet square. They are all finished with the best of white pine and painted in five different colors. Three of the principal chambers have marbelized mantels filled with tracings of gold, and the house throughout has all of the modern improvements. [The mantels are of wood with decorative glazed tile hearths and facings.] Work upon the stable has not commenced, but one to correspond to the style of the house will be under way in a few weeks. The extensive grounds have been drained and graded by Mr. John Fadden, of this city, who will lay them out in lawns, flower beds, etc. at the proper time. Commodore and Mrs. Baldwin sail for Europe on the 19th inst. for the purpose of witnessing the Paris Exposition, and on their return here about the middle of June they will enter upon the occupancy of their elegant summer abode, the cost of which, including the grounds, will not be far from \$50,000."

B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure:
The name, "Gamir Doon", was given to the house by Arakel H. Bozyan. Its literal translation from Armenian is "the red house".

C. Sources of Information:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Charles Handy Russell (1796-1884) Scrapbook, volume III,
p. 139, Newport Historical Society, Vault A.

2. Secondary and published sources:
Records of Deeds in the Newport City Hall.
Downing, Antoinette F. and Scully, Vincent J. Jr., The Architectural Heritage of Newport, Rhode Island, New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., second edition, 1967, pp. 158, 394, 395.
3. Likely sources not yet investigated:
Office records of the firm of Potter and Robertson of New York.

Prepared by Thomas M. Slade
University of Notre Dame
Project Historian
July, 1970

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The work of Potter and Robertson of New York, this is an interesting example of the Shingle Style or American version of the Queen Anne Revival with textured decorative surfaces and open planning.
2. Condition of fabric: The house is in fair to good condition. It is used as three separate apartments.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: about 80 feet by 60 feet; an irregular rectangle; 2-1/2 stories.
2. Foundations: Foundations are all of stone.
3. Wall construction: Materials used are brick, wood half-timbering, boards, clapboards, and shingles. The red brick is laid in red mortar; the wood is painted red. The walls are broken into strong, interlocked patterns of coordinated half-timbering, window mullioning, chimney pilastering, and gable and eave framing.
4. Structural system: On the exterior, masonry covers the lower walls with wood framing and heavy studding above.

Interior partitions are wood framed with heavy studding.

5. Chimneys: There are four brick chimneys, tall pilastered shapes with elaborate stepped caps.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways: The main doorway from the front porch is a wide Dutch door with small panels.
 - b. Windows: There are a variety of window shapes, mostly double hung-sashes. Deep window frames are worked into the pattern of heavy timbering and gable framing.
7. Roof: Steep gable roofs, originally covered with wood shingles laid in horizontal patterns, are now covered with asphalt shingles. Tall pyramidal roof at north end of the building appears to be a later addition. The eaves are open with corner brackets and decorated barge boards.
8. Porches, stoops, and bulkheads: A long, one-story porch crosses the entire west front. It is developed into a carriage porch at the front door. The turned wood porch columns are on brick plinths. The original back porch leading to the garden is now enclosed and slightly enlarged as a separate stairway for the south apartment.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plan: The entrance, at the center of the front, leads to axially arranged large vestibule, square central hall, and dining room at the rear of the house. To the right from the hall is a large rectangular living room or library, and to the left of the hall are two openings, first to a large drawing room with a polygonal end, second to a pantry and back stair which are in a wing to the left rear. The central hall is open the full height of the house, with a balcony at the second floor, open loggias at the third, and a panelled ceiling that follows the slope of the pitched roof. A new floor has been inserted at the third-floor level. Bedrooms on the second floor follow the general room disposition of the first floor. The third floor is further divided into many small bedrooms.
2. Stairways: The broad, open well stairway, from first to second floor, is U-shaped with a landing. It is finished with a heavy railing with turned newels and balusters, panelled wainscoting and soffits. The back stairs run from the basement to the third floor.

3. Flooring: Richly colored ceramic tile is laid in the vestibule with wood flooring in parquet patterns in the better rooms.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster walls are finished with wainscoting. The plaster and beamed ceilings have plaster ceiling cornices. There is intricate Queen Anne Revival detailing in the woodwork. In many areas the dark stained colors in the woodwork are now painted over in light colors. Some traces of original red, vertical striped flocked paper are found on plaster walls. The walls in the small reception room or coat room off the vestibule retain the original medium grey paint with stencilled bands at top and bottom of floral patterns in pink, red, grey-green, and blue-grey. The decoration is set against the white plaster ceiling with plaster cornice.
5. Doorways and doors: See description.
6. Special decorative features: Fireplaces with wood mantels and glazed tile hearths and facing are located in the first floor rooms and the principal second floor bedrooms. There is an elaborate built-in buffet in the dining room.
7. Hardware: The brass hardware has large, spherical, ribbed doorknobs.
8. Lighting: All light are electric, with several converted gas fixtures still in place.
9. Heating: The new heating system is forced air.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The house faces west toward the front of a deep, level lot, about 200 feet wide at the front, 100 feet wide at the rear, and about 600 feet from front to rear. A lawn with large trees surrounds the house. The rear yard is overgrown.
2. Historic landscape design: There is a brick wall along the front with gates at either end opening to an oval drive. The wall is partly demolished including one gate post. The wooden gates are in the basement of the house.
3. Outbuildings: A stable toward the rear of the lot has been demolished.

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

Newport HABS Project -- 1970. Sponsored in cooperation with the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, Antoinette F. Downing, Chairman. Under the direction of James C. Massey, Chief of HABS, and Osmund Overby, (University of Missouri), Project Supervisor, Jack E. Boucher, photographer.